FABACEAE

A NEW COMBINATION IN *TEPHROSIA*

In *Bothalia* 12: 448 (1979), Dr L. E. Codd described a new species *Mundulea pondoensis* from the Lusikisiki District in Transkei. Gillet, J. B. in *FTEA, Legum. – Papil.* 1: 120 (1971) gives the difference between *Mundulea* and *Tephrosia* as follows:-

Pods coriaceous, not or very tardily dehiscent, ultimately breaking up irregularly; lateral nerves of leaflets curved-ascending ..... *Mundulea*

Pods thinly coriaceous, dehiscent, lateral nerves of leaflets usually closely parallel, oblique to midrib and extended to the margin ..... *Tephrosia*

To this may be added that leaflets of *Mundulea* are generally widest below the middle, ovate or ovate-lanceolate, whereas those of *Tephrosia* are narrowed at the base, widest above the middle and generally obovate to oblong. The pods of *Tephrosia* dehisce, often explosively, the separated valves becoming twisted. On this basis, *M. pondoensis* is better placed under *Tephrosia*.

A number of interesting features, however, separate it from other southern African representatives of *Tephrosia*. These other members are herbs, suffrutices or small shrubs of relatively recent semi-arid to moist savanna, bushveld, thornveld or grassland, whereas this species is a shrub or often robust tree to 5 m (A.T.D. Abbott, pers. comm.) of dry evergreen forest margins on moister slopes or drainage lines (G. R. Nichols, pers. comm.). In addition, it is restricted to the highly endemic Table Mountain Sandstone (T.M.S.) outcrop area of Pondoland and southern Natal.

The habitat, arborescent habit and uncharacteristic flowers which are large and orange, may indicate a different, perhaps earlier origin than the rest of the genus in the flora area. Whereas most species of *Tephrosia* in southern Africa have deep pink to mauve flowers, a few, *T. marginella* H. M. Forbes, *T. elongata* E. Mey. and *T. linearis* (Willd.) Pers. var. *discolor* (E. Mey.) Brummitt have small orange flowers and they may provide some clue on further study.

It has been hypothesized (A. E. van Wyk, pers. comm.) that if this species shows sufficient 'primitive' features when the genus is compared as a whole, it may represent a 'relic' of a once much wider and earlier distribution of a tropical flora adapted to the infertile soils derived from sandstone of the Msikaba formation, Natal group; closely related to the Cape supergroup.

Very much the same appears to have happened within the present distribution of *Tephrosia*. Southern Africa has been a region of considerable radiation for the genus and once again *T. bachmannii* Harms has become an endemic in the same region of Pondoland and southern Natal, although its relation with the other species is not at all obscure.

Tephrosia pondoensis *(Codd) Schrire*, comb. nov.

Mundulea pondoensis Codd in Bothalia 12: 448 (1979). Type: Transkei, 3129 (Port St Johns): near Dindini Store (–BD), *Codd 9318* (PRE, holo.!)

NATAL. — 3030 (Port Shepstone): Oribi Gorge (–CB), *Abbott 962*, (NH), *Nichols 689*, (NH), *Schrire 1421*, (NH); Umtamvuna Nature Reserve (–CC), *Abbott 987*, (NH), *Abbott 1009*, (NH).

TRANSKEI. — 3129 (Port St Johns): near Dindini Store (–BD), *Codd 9318*, (PRE), Umsikaba, Ndindini (–BD), *Strey 10084*, (NH).

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